

BOXING AGAINST BULLIES - Star campaign



Ross spars with pupil Liam Clegg at a demonstration of sparring to pupils of Stocksbridge High School

By Bob Westerdale

THE Star and Sheffield Boxing Centre today join forces to launch a campaign to help victims of bullying and bigotry in our community.

Our "Boxing against Bullying" campaign, which is supported by the NPSCC and former Sports Minister Richard Caborn MP will drive a message that no boy or girl, man and woman, has to put up with harassment and hatred.

Glyn Rhodes, a boxing trainer and former professional, says he and his athletes will talk to vulnerable people at their wits' end - and ensure they get the right kind of advice and assistance.

They are also offering to teach the sport to anyone, male or female, who feel they could benefit from learning the ropes - although they make clear that they would never use their ringcraft to settle disputes.

Our campaign includes an offer, to local schools, of the visit of a symbolic "mentor" - a boxer who supports anti-racism and anti-bullying and would take part in appearances and exhibitions.

Sheffield Boxing Centre (SBC) fighters will be spreading the anti-bullying word at every show they compete in throughout 2008 - the first of which is at Don Valley stadium, on February 15.

What do you think? Post your comments below.

Boxers will also be on hand at a number of other sporting events across South Yorkshire. An 'anti-bullying' fun-run is on the drawing board.

The underlying theme is simply this: You don't have to put up with bullying or racism.

Be strong: seek help.

SBC is becoming a beacon of hope for youngsters, in particular, who suffer problems.

Rhodes said: "Bullying has no place in boxing and if we can do our bit to erase it from some parts of our community we will be delighted.

"What we are doing is telling kids and adults that we are united in the stand against prejudice and will try and help where we can.

"What we are NOT doing, as boxers, is sorting out individual problems with our bare hands, so to speak. That would not solve anything.

"Instead, we at SBC and The Star have a signal we want send out.

"It is a matter of raising awareness...spreading the word which most decent people already recognise, that bullying and racism is not cool."

Ex Sports Minister Richard Caborn, President of the Amateur Boxing Association, was the first to signal his endorsement: "I fully support this innovation. Boxing is one of the best sports you can put in schools to get this sort of message across.

"It is cowards that are usually the bullies in society and there are no cowards or bullies in boxing. There is no racial divide in that sport.

"I positively advocated boxing in schools as Sports Minister, it teaches discipline and self-respect.

"There is absolutely no hiding place in boxing, it builds characters. It takes young people from all parts of society and helps elevate them and their expectations.

"The classic role model would be Brian Anderson, a tough lad who had a lot of tough experiences but has ended up as prison governor.

"I wish this campaign well. It is the type of thing newspapers do very well. Newspapers can be a force for good and The Star has shown that."